

Cardinham & District Gardening Club Chairman's Report 2011

Welcome to our AGM and quick round up of the last year's events. Thanks to the committee and all of you for your support and passion for gardening!

2011 was another challenging year for us gardeners, no change there and I guess that's why we do it! Wouldn't it be boring if everything we planted grew and looked perfect too.

The support of fellow gardeners makes it a challenge worth pursuing and the gardening club gives us that. I have learnt such a lot this year: from wildlife at Lanhydrock – did you know dormice climb trees? to the wonderful hardy exotic grown at Treseder nursery, the techniques for growing pinks on St Martin's using grow bags. The visit to Cotehele was marked by the snow that fell as we climbed to the top of the garden to visit the new orchard with its variety of Cornish apples, but also by the guide who was a practical and informative and informed guide. A couple of us have baby fritalleries grown from self sown seed, learnt how to grow them on. We all promised another trip to Tartendown Nursery – shame its a bit far for a spontaneous visit but well worth a special trip for the wide selection plants including shrubs, trees and herbaceous at reasonable prices. Wonderfully heartening to see a successful family run business competing with the big boys.

I learnt not to be deterred by dreadful weather as we went to Lanhydrock Allotments and were met by enthusiastic allotmenters only too keen to share their expertise and enthusiasm. Their hospitality was heart warming and what I think gardeners are really good at is they love to share not only plants and seed but their love of gardens and all things related. Sharing is what Sarah and Rick did with us at Penknight Nursery for our social evening. No rain! and we were able to sit out with a glass of wine having had a demonstration of propagating agapanthus and a chance to buy from their range of unusual plants. Another tucked away nursery but a real find.

The Annual Flower & Vegetable Show goes from strength to strength and there is no shortage of exhibitors and the club is to be congratulated on the support of members and the hard working committee who make it so successful. We look forward to this year's show and one or two additions to classes as we make it more and more inclusive – wonderful to have a men's cookery class! Unfortunately we had to cancel the visit to the Cider Farm in October as the weather was dreadful and we couldn't get enough support from members. I learnt a lot about patience from Adrian Langdon as he showed us his beautiful wildlife photographs, stunning is an overused word but not in this case. I guess gardeners and photographers do have to be patient and resigned to the fact one doesn't always get the results one wants. That's why both are such a challenge and passion. We finished the year with the annual dinner at the new Duchy Nursery Cafe. Very good it was too, I wish I could make chocolate brownies like they do!

Probably the highlight of the year was the trip to Highgrove in Septembr. We filled a fifty-two seater each of members and friends. It was worth the journey, not only a super garden to visit but frinedly and well-informed guides who pointed out the many unusual and sometimes quirky features of the garden. I think it made us all appreciate that a garden in early autumn can be every bit as beautiful as one in high summer or spring.

Lots to look forward to in 2012 – not least the weather! We have some of our old favourites coming to talk, like Charlie and Liz Pridham from Chacewater, and a visit to RHS Rosemoor and some new like Arundell garden near Newquay. Get your subs up to date and your new programme tonight!

Don't forget this is your club and if you want us to include any visits or speakers or have other ideas on the running of the club we want to hear from you.

Have a great gardening year Its the best way to get rid of those winter blues!